

## Joe and The Fighting Irish

By: Tony Mosley, M.A., LPCC, NCC, DAPA, CRS

It is 5:30 am Thanksgiving morning and I'm thinking about Joe Hawkins and the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame. Joe's team is once again in the national spotlight and will soon play USC for a spot in the BCS championship game.

Tammy and I met Joe and Diane and their beautiful family through our dear friends Mike and Lisa. The joy of being welcomed into their family on different occasions were something Tammy and I have spoken of often with warm appreciation. I'll always remember Joe's greeting, "Hey, to New York!" For the unskilled ear that was New York speak for "TONewYork (TONY) it's good to see you!"

A few years ago Joe invited Mike, Steve, and I to a Notre Dame game in South Bend. Joe and his longtime friend Wally were great hosts. Anxious to get to the game on Saturday, Joe and Wally decided scraping the windows on the car was a small detail with which they didn't want to be bothered. As we followed in another vehicle, I couldn't help but think "They have driven with their heads hanging out the door windows before." Those who know Joe much better than I, your stories could fill a couple of books. Like most proud Notre Dame followers, Joe was excited to show us around the campus. Seeing the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and The Word of Life mural (better known as Touchdown Jesus) were highlights of the trip.

After finishing the tour of the Basilica, Joe approached us and mumbled something. I asked Mike, "What did he say?" I asked that question often when I was around Joe. As his brother-in-law Mike was able to interpret, "He wants to show us one more thing before watching the game." Shortly we were walking down to the Grotto. Here we are on a Division I college campus, in the midst of college football fever, and I'm invited into a place of quiet prayer and devotion. It was a special, holy moment. Thanks, Joe.

Joe died last January and has missed this years rise of the Fighting Irish to the #1 ranked team in the country. I can just hear Joe now. As many of us have said about others that have gone before us, "I'm sure he is watching and smiling." Since that day in South Bend, I've been following Notre Dame football, always thinking about Joe Hawkins. I hope and pray you will take time to invite others into those places where you live and are passionate about.

Another big game is about to happen. Go Irish!!!  
Joe, thanks for the invitation.

Grace and peace to all, TONewYork (Tony)